

ahead to Antwerp together with certain harbour craft, and these were assembled with the personnel of the Parties in an ex-Belgian Cavalry Camp at Burg Leopold. The diary of the movements of these Parties shows how these Parties despite their late formation did, with the unstinted help of the Army, reach their destinations soon enough to take timely control of the situations in their ports.

27. The actual surrender of the North German Ports began on 26th April when a Naval Officer of 30 Advance Unit (the naval unit specially formed for the collection of intelligence) reached the Bremen City Hall at 1030 and accepted the surrender of the city from the acting Bergermeister. U.S. Naval Task Force 126 designated for this port was already on the Continent and the Commander of this force (Rear-Admiral A. G. Robinson, U.S.N.), made a preliminary reconnaissance on the 27th April. He found that there was no apparent damage to docks, quays and other harbour installations but that warehouses were totally destroyed and prisoners-of-war stated that many mines had been sown in the enclosed basins and the adjacent river. The capacity of the port was restricted to some extent by sunken ships and in fact no war or merchant ships were found afloat.

28. On the 3rd May the Hamburg garrison surrendered unconditionally, and Commodore H. T. England, D.S.O., who had gone forward with the occupying Army forces entered the port as Commodore-in-Charge. He found the attitude of the port officials cowed but co-operative. The Port Party for Hamburg was not far behind and entered the port two days later.

29. The 5th May saw the surrender of all German Forces in Germany, Holland and Denmark, including the garrisons of Heligoland and Frisian Islands, and with the cessation of offensive operations all the remaining Naval Parties were able to move into their respective ports to establish control and initiate measures for the disarmament of the German Navy.

30. The two British Flag Officers, who were to be in command of the naval forces occupying the ports in the British zone of North Germany, were then moving in to set up their Headquarters. These Flag Officers were:—

Rear-Admiral H. T. Baillie-Grohman, C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E., whose title then was Flag Officer, Kiel. His command included the naval forces in the area eastward of the Elbe to the Russian border, and his title was later altered to Flag Officer, Schleswig-Holstein. He set up his Headquarters first at Kiel and later at Plön so as to be within easy reach of 8th Corps Headquarters.

Rear-Admiral G. C. Muirhead-Gould, D.S.C., whose title then was Flag Officer, Wilhelmshaven. This was changed later to Flag Officer, Western Germany, to indicate better the scope of his command, which included all naval forces in the British zone west of the Elbe, and Hamburg. His Headquarters were first established at Sengwarden near Wilhelmshaven and later moved to Buxtehude about 20 miles from Hamburg.

31. These two Flag Officers with the staffs and Naval Parties under their commands lived through some adventurous and difficult times

and the stories of their early days given in their reports of proceedings make interesting and instructive reading.

32. Admiral Baillie-Grohman reports that VE Day was anything but a public holiday for himself and his staff, for on that day, besides interviews with German senior officers, he had to cope with 4,000 troops who landed at Eckernförde from landing craft unaware that the War was over and full of enthusiasm for continuing it. The influx of refugee ships from the Baltic was a constant source of anxiety to him at the time.

33. Admiral Muirhead-Gould landed at Heligoland and accepted its surrender on the 11th May. He found the island devastated by bombing and almost uninhabitable, but left a British Naval Party on the island under the command of a Lieutenant-Commander, who on the next day found himself compelled to place the German Senior Naval Officer under arrest for his obstructive conduct.

#### *Naval Situation in Norway and Denmark at the Time of Surrender.*

34. The S.H.A.E.F. Mission to Denmark of which the naval element was headed by Rear-Admiral R. V. Holt, C.B., D.S.O., M.V.O., had arrived in Copenhagen on the 5th May. It was considered important to make an early show of naval strength in Copenhagen and on the 9th May, the cruisers BIRMINGHAM and DIDO with four destroyers arrived there and assisted materially in those early and difficult days which are more fully described by Rear-Admiral Holt in his report. Operation "Crosskeys" was that designed to provide for the early establishment of coastal and mine-sweeping forces in Danish waters and the "Crosskeys" convoy, consisting of H.M.S. TASAJERA carrying Coastal Force Maintenance Unit No. 2 together with two Coastal Force Flotillas, four Minesweeping Flotillas, tankers and other craft carrying stores, arrived in Copenhagen on the 22nd May.

35. In Norway the first members of the S.H.A.E.F. Mission arrived at Oslo on the 8th May and Commodore Askin, Royal Norwegian Navy, as representative of the Allied Naval Commander, opened direct negotiations with representatives of the German Naval High Command in Oslo. The British Flag Officer, Norway (Rear-Admiral J. S. M. Ritchie) sailed from Rosyth in H.M.S. DEVONSHIRE, which was carrying H.R.H. Crown Prince of Norway who landed with his suite on the 13th May after scenes of enthusiasm from boats carrying crowds of cheering Norwegians as the ship steamed up the Oslo Fiord.

36. British Naval Officers-in-Charge designated for the main ports in Norway left England in destroyers on 13th May and settled down in their ports to the primary job of organising minesweeping in the approaches to the ports, which was largely carried out by German minesweepers under German supervision.

#### *The Surrender of the German Navy.*

37. The Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief had been present at Rheims on the 7th May when General Jodl and Grand Admiral Friedeberg, the plenipotentiaries of the German High Command signed the unconditional surrender of all the German Land, Sea and Air